REMARKS

The Official Action of June 9, 2006, and the prior art cited and relied upon therein have been carefully studied. The claims in the application are now claims 1, 2 and 4-7, and these claims define patentable subject matter warranting their allowance. Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance.

Acknowledgement by the PTO of the receipt of applicant's papers filed under Section 119 is noted.

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under §102 as being anticipated by Camorani et al WO 96/15888 (Camorani). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Camorani discloses an apparatus for compacting powders comprising a first pressing mold (9) and a second pressing mold (19) connected by conveyor means (2, 18). The first mold (9) comprises a lower die (12) fixed at the level of the conveyor, and an upper die (10) movable in the cavity of a frame (11), which frame is vertically movable between a raised position over the conveyor and a lower position in contact with the conveyor.

The frame isolates the portion of powder to be pressed and contains it laterally while the upper die exerts the pressing actions. The result is a blank of square shape made of powder pressed at a pressure of more or less 50 to 100 kg/cm^2. This pressure achieves a first compaction far from the final compaction which is generally up to more than 400 kg/cm^2, and such first compaction is intended to stabilize the powders and to get the air to leave the mold.

The blank is then transferred to the second pressing mold (19) which carries out the final compaction and comprises an upper movable die (26-the hammer) and a lower die (28-the anvil) fixed at the same level of the conveyor. However in Camorani the lower die (28) is inserted into the cavity of the die plate (27) which has the same shape and dimensions of the blank molded by the first mold, whereby the blank must be precisely located relative to the lower die.

The lower die (28) also has roughly the same dimensions of the blank to be pressed in the second mold.

Because the lower die (28) and the die plate (27) both have the same shape and dimensions of the blank molded by the first mold (9), the blank must be virtually exactly aligned with the forming cavity of the second mold, and therefore the Camorani apparatus suffers from the same general defects as mentioned in the acknowledged prior art of applicant's specification. In this regard, attention is respectfully invited to paragraphs [0019] and [0020] on page 5 of applicant's specification:

> …, during said loading [or the blank to the compacting mold], the blank must be virtually exactly aligned with the forming cavity of the second mould, and have virtually the same plan dimensions.

This in itself makes the operation more difficult. In addition, problems can arise. Thus, if alignment is not exact and the dimensions are not the same,

> when the lower die descends, the blank remains temporarily engaged with at least one upper edge of the forming cavity, to then fall onto the completely lower die, …, this normally resulting in breakage of the blank and hence its discard… .

These drawbacks are overcome by the present invention. Thus, in applicant's apparatus, the fixed lower die, i.e. the anvil, is not inserted into the cavity of a die plate, and has dimensions larger than the dimensions of the blank. There is no need for a die plate as in the prior art, and the periphery of the blank is free, i.e. the blank is not located inside a cavity while the second pressing occurs. In other words, the second or final compaction occurs on a blank completely free along its periphery. This distinction is now brought out with more clarity in the amendments presented above, wherein the subject matter of claim 3 and some additional details have been inserted into claim 1.

New claim 7 is of somewhat similar scope, and is patentable for the same reasons, new claim 7 incorporating a means clause.

Withdrawal of the rejection is in order and is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been rejected under §102 as anticipated by Longinotti USP 4,158,533. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 has not been rejected on Longinotti. As claim 3 has now been incorporated into claim 1, applicant need not further address this rejection at the present time. For the record, however, the amendments made above are made entirely without prejudice, applicant reserving his rights to proceed (in a continuing application) with broader claims, without any penalty whatsoever, applicant relying on §§120 and 119, if applicant chooses to so proceed.

Claims 1, 3 and 4 have been rejected as anticipated by Miki et al USP 5,776,511 (Miki). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Miki discloses an apparatus and method for continuously forming a sheet from a pulverized raw material mixture, e.g. shredded recycled material, for example with thermoplastic binder (column 1, lines 9-26; column 4, lines 10-18). Applicant understands that the PTO is relying on Fig. 2 and interpreting plates 46A and 46B as being a first pressing unit and plates 51A and 51B, immediately adjacent plates 46A and 46B, as being a second compacting unit.

However, these elements are actually different parts of the same compacting unit and do not provide any additional compacting function (the plates 51A and 51B are simply cooling plates).

Applicant moreover does not see that the first set of plates 46A and 46B are connected to the second plates 51A and 51B by a conveyor system and, importantly, applicant does not see that the plate 51B is fixed whereas the plate 51A moves between a raised position and a lowered position.

Withdrawal of the rejection is in order and is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes that no rejections have been imposed under §112, whereby applicant understands that applicant's claims are deemed by the PTO to meet all the requirements of the first and second paragraphs of §112. Applicant is proceeding in reliance thereof.

The prior art documents of record and not relied upon by the PTO have been noted, along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently material to warrant their application against any of applicants' claims.

Applicant believes that all issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed above in a manner favorable to allowance of the present application. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early formal allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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